GISette
Email Newsletter

November 2007

Welcome to the twenty-eighth edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to more than 1,500 of our users and partner agencies to keep them informed of data updates, GIS events, and on-going technology developments. This newsletter will not replace more focused e-mails that many of you currently receive. A page on our website has been created for the GISette. There you will find back issues of the GISette and an online subscription form.

While our primary intent in publishing the GISette is to disseminate information related to MassGIS initiatives and data development in particular, we also see the GISette as a means of communicating public agency GIS news. So we encourage readers to send in updates or announcements concerning public agencies that they would like included in the GISette. We particularly want to encourage submission of announcements concerning data development projects. Announcements should be sent to Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS Announces Version 2.0 of Digital Plan Standard

In January 2006 MassGIS released the Version 1.0 of the "Standard for Digital Plan Submittals to Municipalities". MassGIS is please to announce the release of Version 2.0. Changes in version 2.0 include requiring use of a stronger and more explicit disclaimer when:

1) Re-distributing files that have been submitted to municipalities as part of conforming to this standard. For example, distribution in response to a public records request; and
2) Displaying electronically GIS data updated using content from files submitted in complying with this standard.

The standard's key provision is requiring submittal of a Standard Digital File (SDF). The SDF contains features extracted from the source CADD file used to produce the plan for a proposed development. Version 2.0 of the standard adds the requirement that the SDF be accompanied by a copy of the original CADD file in PDF format.   Finally, some confusion concerning which requirements from Levels I and II of the standard also applied to Level III has been corrected.

These changes in Version 2.0 were reviewed and accepted by individuals from the various stakeholder groups as useful additions to the standard. The new version of the standard can be found on the MassGIS web site.

Public Records Law Revisited

From conversations MassGIS staff members have had with local government employees, it is clear that there is continuing confusion as to the provisions of the public records law and in particular its applicability to GIS data. Therefore we thought it would be helpful to remind readers of the GISette that GIS data are subject to the public records law. For more details on the law and for a short presentation summarizing key elements of the public records law, including some

specific questions concerning the public records law and GIS data, see the Public Records Law page on the MassGIS web site.

Online Mapping

Web Mapping Services News

MassGIS has upgraded to GeoServer 1.6. See details of What's New.

Much more documentation on using the webservices has been added to the MassGIS Web Mapping Services wiki, especially examples on using the spatial operators. Requests can be sent to the services asking for features within a certain distance of a point, line or poly for example. More documentation is available on various output formats from the services. In additional to image formats (jpg, tiff, png, gif) and XML responses, responses can be in such formats as shapefiles, PDF, GeoRSS, SVG, KML, an OpenLayers application or other types.

MassGIS has created a public Google Group for users of the services. The group is called and can be found at "MassGIS_Webservices" Feel free to join the list to receive announcements and to post questions to other users. Users within the state are using such methods as .NET or Javascript based MapBuilder to build online mapping applications.

Saul Farber attended the Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial Conference (FOSS4G) in Victoria, Canada and gave a presentation on the MassGIS web mapping services. His presentation can be found here.

Thematic Maps for Special Education Data

The Department of Education has launched a GIS application enabling its users to visually compare how districts are performing on their State Performance Plan targets for special education. The application utilizes MassGIS' web services to make WMS and WFS requests to access Massachusetts spatial data. The thematic maps are a new feature on the School and District Profiles web page. View an example of the data for the Boston Public Schools. The DOE will be using maps to display additional data in the future.

Database Updates

- **NHESP Regulatory Layers Updated** - 10/24/2007
  NHESP has updated the Priority Habitats of Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife layers.

- **U.S. Congressional Districts Layer** **Updated** - 10/23/2007
  Attribute changes were made to Fifth district following the special election victory of Rep. Nicola S. Tsongas.

- **MEPA ENF Points Layer** **Updated** - 10/22/2007
  Point layers were added for 2007 Q1, Q2 and Q3.

- **State Senate Districts Layer** **Updated** - 10/15/2007
  Three attribute changes were made to the Senate polygon layer.

- **New England Mask Layer** **Updated** - 9/18/2007
  State names have been added to the attribute table, and the features are now multi-part, with one polygon for each state.

- **Zoning Layer** **Updated** - 9/4/2007
  Data were updated for 93 municipalities. Downloadable data files were replaced on the ftp site for all towns, as each file has a defined spatial reference and metadata.

ArcMap Tips

You can save clicks in ArcMap by using the CTRL key to click all layers on or off. This works with the Table of Contents display tab – both turning layers on and off and hiding the legend -- and with the Table of Contents selection tab. Just hold the CTRL key while you click in a box and the action will apply to all layers in the TOC.

Manipulating records in attribute tables has been greatly enhanced in ArcMap 9.2. From within a table you can now select and unselect records, hide fields, and zoom to a record; you can also copy values in a field. Open a table and press the F1 key to see the new table features.

New in ArcGIS 9.2 Service Pack 2: When you have more than one data frame in ArcMap, you can open multiple, separate viewer windows, each displaying a data frame. This way you can view more than one frame at once (similar to the different Views in ArcView 3.x). To open a separate window, choose Window > Viewer. A new viewer window will open, showing the contents of the *active* data frame. You can activate each data frame and open a new viewer window for each.

Staff News and Meeting Announcements

GIS Technician, Nick Leden, will be working with Sean Sweeney and Laura Roy on updating and refining the NAVTEQ address geocoding data. Nick is originally from Illinois, where he graduated from Illinois State University with a B.S in Anthropology. He recently moved to the Boston area from Phoenix, AZ where he worked for an archaeological consulting company as an archaeologist and GIS Technician. Nick is currently enrolled in the Salem State College Geo-Information Sciences Certificate/Masters Program.

MassGIS has lost a much valued and prolific member of our staff. **Susan Brunton**, who has been with us for six years, has taken a position with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Susan's accomplishments were many, but her legacy will be her many projects developing custom tools for ArcGIS using ArcObjects and Visual Basic, as well as some stand-alone VB applications. All of the MassGIS staff and surely the many customers she interfaced with wish her well at MAPC.

GIS Day

For a number of reasons, MassGIS did not conduct its annual GIS Day event at the State House this year. We appreciate the participation and attendance of our friends and supporters over the years. Several members of MassGIS staff were dispatched to other GIS Day events across the state.

MGIC Seminar Series - Open Standards at MassGIS: A Success Story and Making an On-line Map with Your Data + Data from the MassGIS Web Services-live demo November 27 10-Noon McCormack State Office Bldg, One Ashburton Place 21st floor in Boston.

Any comments or suggestions about the GISette are welcomed paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS-The Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information is located within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and is charged with the collection, enhancement, storage and dissemination of the Commonwealth's geographic data.

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